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Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): Your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee after you presided over the work of the Security Council with such competence and skill is a tribute to your personal qualities as an excellent diplomat and wise statesman. Allow me therefore to offer you my delegation's warm congratulations and assure you of its full co-operation during your term of office. To all the members of the Bureau, who are to assist you during your term of office, I address my wishes for their complete success in carrying out their functions.

In discussing all the issues related to general and complete disarmament as the Declaration of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament conceived of it, my delegation thinks that, because of the relaxation in international relations between East and West which began on 7 December 1987 in Washington with the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, which was ratified in June 1988, disarmament is no longer a simple, ideal objective for Member States to achieve, but rather something which might become a reality in the not-too-distant future. This could be so because after the Treaty, which is historic in its scope, there have been other treaties between the two super-Powers, and the Treaty itself brings about a considerable reduction in existing arsenals and opens up encouraging prospects. We call on the other nuclear Powers to accede to it.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

This new climate reigning between the two greatest nuclear Powers in the world augurs well for a new vision and outlook for international relations conducive to an era of genuine détente capable of foiling any threat to international peace and security.

The moment the major nuclear Powers, which are also the five permanent members of the Security Council, agree to the total elimination of the cold war, which has so poisoned relations between East and West since the Second World War, there will also be hope that the international community will occupy itself more with poverty, the indebtedness of some countries, improving environmental conditions, reducing arms stockpiles and, not least, with the economic and social development of the third world countries. If this is done, even though the crucial problems facing mankind are tending towards a satisfactory outcome thanks to the joint efforts of the two super-Powers, it is likely that achieving the general and complete disarmament which goes hand-in-hand with East-West détente will quell the regional conflicts and hotbeds of tension now disturbing the peace of the international community.

Military co-operation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact, the relations between which have just taken a new turn, will be possible. It is in precisely this context that my delegation sees States as having a responsibility in terms of transfers of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction to other countries, transfers which have in our time enabled some States to overequip themselves militarily to the point of striking attitudes of belligerence and arrogance towards certain countries with which they are in dispute, thus defying resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and also the provisions of the Charter concerning the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

This is what has happened with a non-aligned country, Iraq, which has been able, with the co-operation of other, militarily well-equipped countries, to accumulate stocks of terrifying weapons, including even chemical weapons, predisposing it to hostility towards other countries. Kuwait, a small State with no particular military defence which aspired to peace, the legal protection of the United Nations and to its own internal security, has fallen victim to this. Pushing its effrontery to the point of ignoring the provisions of Article 2 of the Charter - under which all States undertake to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in their disputes with other States, and in any other way inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations - Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and made it its nineteenth province, as if any State in our Organization which had a powerful military arsenal could at any moment use it to attack, annex or invade other, more vulnerable States in their vicinity which were smaller than they are and not so well equipped militarily.

The case in point involves a flagrant violation of the rules of international law and of the provisions of the Charter. Iraq must immediately desist, and restore Kuwait's sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and legitimate authorities.

As Albert Schweitzer said, man has lost his ability to foresee and prevent the consequences of his own acts. This proverb applies to the tragedy now taking place in Kuwait, and should inspire Iraq, as aggressor and invader, to think hard: the consequences which will flow from the acts of aggression being committed by Iraq against Kuwait, Kuwaiti citizens, foreign citizens, diplomats whose diplomatic immunity has not been respected and against those who have been taken hostage during this crisis, will be unpleasant, and it is Iraq alone which will have to bear them.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

Wars in the third world have today become as dangerous as any possible nuclear conflagration. Since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, conventional warfare has claimed more victims than did the Second World War in the 1940s. It would be a sad, sad thing for mankind to witness another war in the Persian Gulf, this time pitting a non-aligned country, one State alone, because of its obstinacy and obscurantism in the face of several peace initiatives, against many allied forces, including the strike force. These forces, given the accumulation in the Persian Gulf of sophisticated weapons and warships with the most formidable arsenals, waits only for the word from its leaders to inflict massive destruction on Iraq.

If nuclear weapons are used, all mankind will suffer, and we can take it that if chemical weapons are used, thousands of human lives will be sacrificed simply because of the stubbornness of a country which continues to ignore the right of Kuwait, a Member of our Organization, a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, a member of the Arab League, to its existence as a sovereign State.

To transfer arms is therefore as dangerous as it is to produce them, stockpile them and use them. My delegation has therefore always supported resolution 44/116 N of 15 December 1989 on international arms transfers, in which the General Assembly invites all Member States that have not yet done so to make available to the Secretary-General their views and proposals on this issue (resolution 44/116 N, para. 1). The Conference on Disarmament at Geneva, as the single multilateral negotiating body on the arms transfer issue, should pay special attention to it with a view to producing recommendations that would prohibit States from transferring weapons of mass destruction to other States which ask for them but whose political ambitions cannot ensure international peace and security.

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(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament is also responsible for bringing to a conclusion the negotiations on the convention banning the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. The danger which chemical weapons represent is clear, given how cheap it is to produce them and their ease of handling in regional conflicts or in wars between States. There is therefore good reason to speed up the conclusion of work on these weapons so that we can spare mankind the atrocities and terror they wreak on human beings.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

How are we to build a better world if the environment in which we are developing imperils the very life of our planet? The various nuclear-arms races in outer space and under water and on land expose the world to self-destruction. Can toxic industrial wastes improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of our planet? My delegation believes that the questions raised both by the nuclear-arms races and by the dumping of toxic industrial wastes can be suitably answered only by the States involved in these practices. The tragedy of Chernobyl in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the clearest proof of this.

The security of each Member State of our Organization depends upon a series of elements both within and outside the country that can, at any moment, diminish the freedom and well-being of individuals. For the security of the individual, of each citizen, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, and the protection of fundamental human rights are inseparable from the security of States and international security as a whole.

At a time when fundamental human rights and freedoms are enjoying an unprecedented resurgence in all countries of the world, particularly those where democracy as such had not been accepted, we must consider all regional conflicts, or even some crises, from the point of view of human rights. For those rights include the right to life, the right to personal security, the right to enjoy fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in the democratic process within one's own society and State.

My country, Zaire, is committed to this course and intends to respect the rights of its own citizens as well as those of other countries which share its economic and social life.

Mr. AWAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation joins with those who have already expressed their congratulations to you on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. We should also like to express our appreciation of the role played by your predecessor, Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela, in conducting the work of this Committee. We also extend our congratulations to the members of the Bureau and pay tribute to the way in which the Secretariat undertakes its tasks in this Committee.

My delegation is pleased that the dialogue on disarmament currently under way is taking place after the end of the cold war at a time of greater understanding between the two super-Powers and increased confidence of Member States in the United Nations and its role and the supremacy of the noble principles of the Charter.

The two super-Powers made some modest progress towards halting the nuclear-arms race and imposing a nuclear-test ban. Though this calls for optimism, many peoples cannot overcome their fear and anxiety while waiting for a total nuclear-test ban. There are some who say those tests must stop now, if we are to stand a chance to continue to survive and that, otherwise, the world is doomed.

The aspiration to peace and security is, in essence, mankind's desire to lead a normal life that is free of all forms of nuclear threat. This desire crystallizes the persistent need to ensure the survival of mankind and create a better future for succeeding generations - an objective that can be achieved only through the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The maintenance of any stockpiles of those weapons, no matter how limited, will continue to be a terrifying nightmare for all men.

Therefore, my delegation, especially since the Paris Conference of 1989, has striven, on both the international and regional levels, to free the Middle East region and all other regions from all weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Awad, Syrian Arab Republic)

At the forty-fourth session in this Committee, after voting on the draft resolution on chemical weapons, I explained the position of my delegation as follows:

"The Syrian Arab Republic has vital national interests in the prohibition of chemical weapons and also in the banning of all weapons of mass destruction, in our own region as well as in the world as a whole. My country reaffirmed that position by approving the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference, and it now reiterates it and reaffirms the need to link the prohibition of chemical weapons with the banning of bacteriological (biological) weapons, as stated in paragraph 45 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, of 1978." (A/C.1/44/PV.41, pp. 84-85)

This is the position of my delegation on the international level. On the regional level, my delegation took a similar stand at the Third Ministerial Conference of the Mediterranean Non-Aligned Countries, held at Algiers on 25 and 26 June 1990. The final declaration has already reaffirmed the position of the Syrian Arab Republic on this question as follows:

"The Ministers once again drew attention to the dangers inherent in the proliferation of nuclear arms to peace and international security in general and to the Mediterranean region in particular. In this regard, they reiterated their deep concern over repeated reports of Israel's acquisition of nuclear capability, which constitutes a serious threat for the region, and reaffirmed their stand regarding the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. ... They expressed their support for the Egyptian initiative as well as the Syrian proposal aiming at transforming the Middle East region into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction under effective international control within the framework of the United Nations." (A/45/357, p. 6, para. 12)

(Mr. Awad, Syrian Arab Republic)

Israel's refusal to comply with the will of the international community and place its nuclear facilities and installations under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has increased tension in the region and impeded the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

My delegation notes that the Security Council has not had to call upon any other country but Israel to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the IAEA. However, as usual, Israel refused to implement that Security Council resolution, and, just as it does these days, it ignored the condemnation of the General Conference of the IAEA by refusing to give up its nuclear weapons and to place its nuclear facilities, especially its nuclear reactor in Dimona, under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Instead, it co-operated with South Africa in developing intermediate-range missiles and delivery systems. This co-operation, which poses a grave threat to peace and security in Asia and Africa, demonstrates to the world that the fears of the Arab and African States regarding that co-operatioin are fully justified.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones would greatly minimize the risk of nuclear confrontation, reduce the existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons, limit their transfer and strengthen the non-proliferation system all over the world. That is why the Syrian Arab Republic has continued to call for the implementation of the Declaration of the denuclearization of Africa and of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and support for all international efforts aimed at the convening of an international conference for this purpose.

The Syrian Arab Republic also supports the negotiations on unity between the two Koreas and on making the Korean peninsula a zone of peace free of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Awad, Syrian Arab Republic)

The increased proliferation of nuclear weapon calls for urgent international measures to consolidate the security of non-nuclear-weapon States as well as international military, political and legal measures that would provide protection for those States from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them.

Disarmament issues are now among the most urgent issues of our time in a world that has become an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Our world, which now has the ability to provide mankind with a better life as a result of technological progress, possesses at the same time the means of destroying every form of life on Earth. There is no doubt that the achievement of significant progress towards disarmament would provide all the peoples of the world with the necessary climate for their progress, prosperity and development. Disarmament and development have today become the two principal challenges that face the international community. The world will either continue to squander its resources on producing and stockpiling weapons of death and destruction or channel those resources to development and reconstruction.

The present international situation requires that the disarmament principles of the Charter should become a major integral part of any collective effort towards ensuring the safety of the world. My delegation hopes that the United Nations will today play under its Charter a primary role in the field of disarmament and enhance international security with a view to establishing a new world order based on its noble humanitarian principles.

Mr. KOEFFLER (Austria): My delegation is following the tradition of addressing specific items on the Committee's agenda. As Austria is chairing the Preparatory Committee that will set in motion the Paris summit on conventional armed forces reduction in Europe, may I be allowed to address briefly agenda item 56 (d), "Conventional disarmament".

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

Conventional disarmament, in particular its increasing high-tech component, is an integral part of the disarmament process. The concept of general and complete disarmament has always included its conventional side on an equal footing with nuclear weapons. Prospects for nuclear disarmament would be greatly enhanced if the threats posed by conventional forces were reduced.

Based on conventional force reduction, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) has provided a framework for the process of establishing a new system of co-operative security in Europe. The CSCE began more than 15 years ago in Helsinki. It is an ongoing and open-ended process, which is now a permanent feature of the European political structure. It has successfully developed into a flexible instrument for balancing the interests of its 35 - now 34 - participating States.

It seems at present that negotiations in Vienna will secure a major disarmament agreement in Europe in less than 2 years, compared to 14 years of unsuccessful mutual and balanced force reduction negotiations.

This agreement, CFE-I, will be the point of departure for a new security system in Europe. Its objective is to establish a stable and verifiable balance of conventional forces at significantly lower levels, thus eliminating surprise attack and large-scale offensive capability. It requires the elimination and verified destruction of excess weapons.

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

The parallel negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures aim at improving and enlarging the provisions agreed upon at Stockholm in 1986. One important achievement of the talks on confidence- and security-building measures was the military doctrine seminar early this year. It brought together around a single table the senior military officials of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Warsaw Pact and the neutrals and non-aligned. We have taken note of the interest in the seminar and of opinions that a similar event in other regions may be worth while pursuing.

If a new confidence- and security-building measure, namely, a mechanism for consideration of unusual activities of a military nature, can be agreed upon, a breakthrough towards more transparency and openness in military matters will have been achieved. In this regard we hold the same view on the subject as that voiced by the representative of the United States in the Committee.

Ensuring co-operative security in the long run requires the establishment of well-defined political procedures and institutional set-ups. The CSCE summit next month aims at providing an institutional structure to the CSCE process in the future. Regular summits and meetings of foreign ministers of all CSCE States, CSCE secretariat facilities and a conflict-prevention centre will form the basic framework for the second set of negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe leading up to the second Helsinki Conference, in 1992. My delegation is encouraged by the fact that by then a disarmament and confidence-building-measures process will be open to all CSCE members that wish to participate.

The topic of regional conventional disarmament has figured on our agenda for many years. As the global nuclear threat seems to recede, the dangers of regional conventional warfare merit all our attention. We therefore believe that the

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

ongoing CSCE process goes beyond the geopolitical framework within which negotiations are taking place in Vienna. We recognize that political and military conflicts require region-specific approaches and solutions. We agree with those delegations that have voiced their opinion that countries may wish to investigate to what extent the Vienna results may provide elements for security- and confidence-building in other regions of the globe. Such an approach may include diverse measures: for example, regular dialogue and exchange of adequate information on security and military matters; and increasing openness and transparency in terms of military capacity, institutional set-ups for conflict- and crisis-prevention and settlement. The Vienna seminar on CSCE, which is being organized with the United Nations for February 1991, is meant to provide an opportunity to find analogies. It will be the second seminar of this kind, after the seminar which was held in September at the University of Vienna. I wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Akashi, for his very valuable assistance in organizing this seminar for February next year. We hope it will be an event that will promote the taking of confidence- and security-building measures in the world.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to emphasize that the CSCE process has placed equal significance on human rights, fundamental freedoms and humanitarian contacts. They have played no small part in enabling a peaceful change to take place in Eastern Europe. I have noted with great interest that the previous speaker, the representative of Zaire, also stressed the importance of fundamental human rights in this sphere. Co-operative security cannot be achieved if proper account is not taken of this human dimension. Security, in the words of one delegation here, is multidimensional. It is to be approached in an integrated manner. It is based on the recognition that - apart from the military one - there are many threats to our livelihood, our health, our development and our very existence.

Mr. WORONIECKI (Poland): In today's statement I should like to express the views of the Polish delegation on two agenda items related to the work of the Conference on Disarmament - namely, chemical weapons and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I should like also to comment briefly on issues concerning the effectiveness of the Conference and ways to improve it.

A radical transformation of the international situation has created a political climate propitious to considerable progress in the field of arms control and disarmament. In this regard it is encouraging that the Conference on Disarmament has immediately responded to the new possibilities brought about by those changes, initiating the consideration of ways and means of adapting to the new international situation and of enhancing its effectiveness. In spite of the so-far-limited results, the first round of exchange of views on several aspects of the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, including such sensitive questions as its agenda or the decision-making process, has been quite promising. We are of the opinion that this work should continue. At the same time we should be aware that all the vital objectives cannot be attained in one step. Alas, in most cases, political transformations are not translated immediately into concrete disarmament measures.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

That was the reason for our suggestion that, while striving for the elaboration of new disarmament agreements, which should remain the principal task of the Conference, proper attention should also be given to intermediary arrangements such as, for example, the elaboration of protocols of understanding and joint recommendations or declarations on confidence- and security-building measures. At least, in the case of some items on the agenda of the Conference, this step-by-step approach seems to us to be more advisable. It can help in achieving some progress without waiting for the finalization of the whole process of a re-evaluation of security concepts and of changes in the strategic policies of States and alliances, which is under way but which will necessarily take time. We are convinced that it is better to have something rather than nothing, if we cannot have everything very soon.

A question of a ban on chemical weapons is the only item on the agenda of the Conference that is considered by almost all delegations to be the one most ripe for early conclusion. Recent events make this task much more urgent. A comprehensive and effective verifiable global convention is long overdue. This year's negotiations began with great expectations. The Paris and Canberra conferences generated strong political impulses and demonstrated that there is a common understanding that the only way to eliminate chemical weapons is to conclude, as soon as possible, the negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction.

However, to our regret, the results of the negotiations registered in the report to the General Assembly, despite numerous and painstaking efforts on the part of the Committee's Chairman, Ambassador Hyltenius, and his close collaborators, are modest vis-à-vis expectations.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

It is true that the chemical weapons convention is a particularly complex and difficult disarmament agreement and negotiators are facing many difficult technical issues. Yet progress has been achieved mainly on those issues. Therefore, it is not the technical complexity of the task which is blocking the way to the completion of our work. We strongly believe that all the prerequisites and elements necessary for a real breakthrough in our negotiations are at our disposal, especially if we take into account the amount of understanding already accumulated in the whole process of negotiations as reflected in the current rolling text. The key to a final solution rests with verification. We do not overdramatize the existing differences in approaches to this problem. At least we now have a clearer picture of what the real positions are on various aspects related to compliance and verification. Now it is time to enter the last stage of the negotiations. What is required in this endeavour is a spirit of compromise, a common search for mutually acceptable solutions to the remaining and well-defined issues. Effective verification is the subject upon which we must concentrate. We share the opinion that priority is to be given to the elaboration of procedures for inspection upon request. Nevertheless, that should not block discussion on other parts of the whole verification system, namely, ad hoc inspections. We should spare no effort in trying to bring our positions closer. The inter-sessional period should be fully used to prepare the ground for the completion of our work in the year to come. It is pointless to set artificial time-limits, but we should not forget that opportunity seldom knocks twice. We are ready to give serious consideration to the proposal for the convening of a special ministerial meeting devoted to chemical weapons within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. If that meeting is to serve its purpose, it should, naturally, be thoroughly prepared. A package approach to the solution of important outstanding issues is also deserving of consideration.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

No one disputes the fact that the universality of the future chemical weapons convention is the core of its successful implementation. Various ideas and proposals have been submitted on how to achieve this goal. Some practical steps have already been undertaken to ensure universal adherence to the convention upon its conclusion. In our opinion, declarations of intent to be among the original signatories of the convention plays an important role in the promotion of its early entry into force. That is why we call on all States that have not yet done so to do so without delay. Poland has already made such a declaration. The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Professor Krzysztof Skubiszewski, in his message to the Conference on Disarmament this past summer, stated:

"The Polish Government reaffirms its readiness to be among the original signatories of the Convention. Poland also wishes to declare its willingness to abide by the provisions of the Convention prior to its entry into force."

Prevention of the arms race in outer space has remained the question of special interest in the work of the Conference. The body of proposals and suggested initiatives related to this question has been further enriched. The contribution of experts has increased and intensive discussions continued. Despite this, we are still far from any agreement in this domain.

Some possibilities of progress are often seen in two fields: first, confidence-building measures related mainly to greater openness and transparency in outer space activities; and secondly, expansion of practical principles for outer space activities through the establishment of a code of conduct or "rules of the road".

This year the discussion in the Ad Hoc Committee introduced a considerable amount of expert knowledge related to these issues. Therefore, we believe that further efforts aimed at defining possible areas of agreement should be continued.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

The delegation of Poland, which presented some ideas related to confidence-building measures, is ready to take an active part in these efforts and consultations.

However, there is still another category of measures where possibilities of an agreement should be sought and where progress might have particular value. Here I have in mind co-operative measures in the use of outer space, not only for civil but also for certain military purposes. Satellite remote-sensing technology has created the capability of monitoring various activities on Earth, which is important from the point of view of international security. This technology can and should be put to the service of international security. Indeed, the idea of having international monitoring agencies or independent satellite observation systems has been advanced by a number of Governments. Such proposals have been made inter alia by France, Canada, the Soviet Union and Sweden. The scope of such a system could cover the monitoring of arms control arrangements, collecting information and data on sensitive areas as well as supporting United Nations peace-keeping efforts.

It would be of the utmost importance if the two most advanced outer space Powers, in co-operation with others which have expressed their interest, could offer the use of their outer space systems, or some part of them, to the United Nations system of collective security. That could become a key element in a new approach to the prevention of the arms race in outer space. This arms race can be prevented not only by bans and prohibitions but also by stimulating international co-operation, enhancing confidence and taking due account of the security interests of all States.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

The cold war profoundly distorted our thinking on international security. The United Nations, inter alia, had to put up with a lot of slogans, empty concepts and futile bargaining. The Conference on Disarmament became a victim of the ideological confrontation between East and West. Those times are, fortunately, over; we must overcome their legacy. Now we face the important task of adjusting United Nations machinery in the field of disarmament to the new political environment. Our recommendations can shape and streamline its activities and performance for the years to come.

The Conference on Disarmament has an important role to play in the implementation of those recommendations. As a single, quite unique, multilateral disarmament negotiating body of a global character, it has all the necessary authority to elaborate, on the basis of those recommendations, meaningful multilateral disarmament agreements. The political climate is propitious. The Conference on Disarmament has to live up to the newly opened possibilities in this regard and make its contribution to international peace and security.

Mr. MAKKAWI (Lebanon): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the Lebanese delegation the most sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at its forty-fifth session. We are confident that your effective leadership and experience will guide us towards a most productive outcome.

I wish also to express my congratulations to the other officers of the Committee on their election.

As previous speakers have outlined, the international community has witnessed in the past year fundamental changes at a dizzying speed: the old order born of the Second World War has collapsed and a new order has emerged which is not yet fully defined or understandable. It manifests itself in a peaceful manner in some

(Mr. Makkawi, Lebanon)

parts of the globe and in a tumultuous manner in others. This new order carries with it high hopes of an extension of democracy world wide; an end to many regional conflicts and to the artificial division of Europe, and evolution, not yet clear-cut, towards a restructuring of security there; the implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - which applies to all United States and Soviet intermediate-range missiles; and, in the near future, an agreement on the reduction of strategic arms, which will have the unprecedented impact of creating major reductions in the most threatening offensive systems.

But this new order carries with it new threats as well, and our ability to cope with these new challenges will be an indicator of the speed with which we can lay the foundations for a more peaceful world.

During the cold war era that has just ended it was widely recognized that the Middle East region was by far the most volatile of all regions and the most prone to actual and potential conflicts. In this new era of conflict resolution and increased co-operation among nations, this truth is reaffirmed by heightened tensions in the occupied territories, by the invasion of Kuwait and its illegal annexation by Iraq, and by the production and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear or chemical. Clearly, the current crisis in the Middle East demonstrates the failure of a partial approach to disarmament and of focusing almost exclusively on global security and neglecting, to a great extent, regional aspects of disarmament.

As we are witnessing in the Middle East, the complex and unexplored interdependence of regional security and global security apparent in the current Middle East crisis has to be addressed, otherwise a spill-over effect of regional crises on global security is inevitable.

(Mr. Makkawi, Lebanon)

In this turbulent and volatile context, any initiative that could lessen the tensions among States and lead to the development of a set of confidence-building measures would be highly welcome. In this respect, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the quality and objectivity of the study on effective and verifiable measures to facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. As stated by the Secretary-General in his report (A/45/435), it is estremely difficult to take steps to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East because of the deep-rooted long-lasting problems that beset the region and make it politically unstable and militarily volatile. None the less, and for precisely these reasons, the adoption of such steps is also an urgent and most desirable objective. The study is realistic in its aim, which is the development of effective and verifiable measures to facilitate the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East rather than actually to create it. As pointed out once again by the Secretary-General, the steps and measures proposed would also have a positive effect on prospects for the settlement of the overall situation in the region, while, conversely, any progress towards lessening these tensions would open the way for the establishment of such a zone.

While we whole-heartedly support any step leading to the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, it is our belief that the final objective of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone cannot be achieved without a major breakthrough in the root problem of the region, namely, the Palestinian question. As long as the rights of the Palestinians, including their inalienable right to a homeland, are denied, there can be no significant progress towards pacifying the region. Moreover, the blatant and still unaddressed injustice that took place in 1948 and deprived the Palestinians of their land has encouraged other aggression against neighbouring countries and the occupation of part of their territory. The

(Mr. Makkawi, Lebanon)

southern part of Lebanon has been under continuous occupation by Israel for 12 years in spite of all the Security Council resolutions, starting with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), demanding its immediate withdrawal from Lebanon. Israel has openly flouted and scoffed at all United Nations resolutions on Lebanon, so far with total impunity.

(Mr. Makkawi, Lebanon)

Turning to the report of the Conference on Disarmament, we welcome the re-establishment by the Conference this year of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban after a seven-year interruption of its work. The partial test-ban Treaty, although useful as regards imposing verification on nuclear tests in outer space and under water, did not include such control for underground tests, which are the major element of current nuclear testing. That is why we fully support the efforts of the parties to the Treaty to convene an amendment conference to convert it into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban Treaty. We sincerely hope that the successful organizational meeting of States parties to the partial test-ban Treaty held in June this year will pave the way to a successful conclusion of the work at the amendment Conference to be held in January 1991.

We hope that the Conference on Disarmament and its Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons will be able to complete and adopt a convention on chemical weapons in the near future.

It is no secret that only one actor on the Middle East scene, namely Israel, produces, develops and stockpiles nuclear weapons and their delivery systems anywhere in the Middle East and beyond. Its co-operation with South Africa on the production of a nuclear-tipped delivery missile known as Jericho II, a two-stage, solid-fuel rocket with an inertial guidance system and a range of 1,450 kilometres, drew fire last year from the United States, which reportedly delivered a series of official protests to Israel on its collaboration with South Africa in its intermediate-range ballistic missiles programme. These were rejected by the Government of Israel.

Of more concern to Israel's neighbours are its continuous refusal to comply with Security Council resolution 487 (1981) by submitting all its nuclear installations to the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards; it is obvious

(Mr. Makkawi, Lebanon)

that Israel intends to continue developing ever more powerful nuclear bombs and ever more far-reaching delivery systems.

The winds of change, freedom, democracy and peace that have swept all continents seem to have ignored the Middle East, the area par excellence where a conflict is most likely to degenerate into a major conflagration involving nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction. It is the hope of Lebanon, a small country caught in this web, that the international community will focus on resolving the outstanding issues there before those issues call themselves to the attention of the world in an unpredictable and devastating way.

Mr. AL-ALFI (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to convey to you my most warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of the Committee. Undoubtedly, your assumption of this responsibility, in addition to being a recognition of your country's positive and effective role in many issues of interest to the international community, at the same time affirms your wisdom and wide experience in the work of the United Nations. These qualities make us confident that you will steer the work of the Committee to the desired success.

I also wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the officers of the Committee and to confirm our readiness to co-operate fully with you to facilitate your work.

The general debate on disarmament in the First Committee this year is characterized by the fact that it reflects the positive developments on the international scene and in present international relations. Instead of the cold war and ideological strife between the two main camps or blocs in the world, we witness co-operation based on law, within a framework that is shaping international relations on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and the important

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

principles embodied therein. Foremost among those principles are the settlement of disputes between States by peaceful means, respect for international legality, the sovereign equality of all States, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the non-use of force in resolving disputes.

If Yemen cherishes its participation in this historical and momentous march, it is all the more proud that its participation now takes place on a solid basis of Yemeni unity, which was achieved by the Yemeni people peacefully and democratically. The solid base of that unity is a democratic Constitution which allows for the plurality of views and ideas, freedom of speech and political opposition. Thus our people has laid the corner-stone of a democratic régime that is new to our area and, by so doing, has contributed to the planting of a seed that, hopefully, will flower in the region and draw sustenance from the stream of peace as we do our utmost to ward off the spectre of conflict and confront all those who would beat the drums of war.

The conclusions reached in the general debate of the General Assembly and the deliberations of the First Committee can be summed up as follows: positive steps have been taken by the Soviet Union and the United States of America to curb the arms race and to bring about arms reduction. It follows, therefore, that all agreements concluded between these two countries reinforce our hope that more steps will be taken in the field of disarmament, taking into account the following facts:

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

First, the existence of huge arsenals of highly sophisticated nuclear weapons capable of destroying mankind and human civilization many times over is no longer acceptable or justifiable, particularly in a new era of international relations whose outstanding feature is co-operation and not confrontation. It is completely illogical to try to ensure international peace and security under the shadow of huge stockpiles of such highly destructive weapons. Given the enormity of nuclear arsenals that presently exist, the achievements made thus far in the field of nuclear disarmament are but a first tentative step towards our goal. Supposedly, the reduction of those arsenals will take place at the same rate and tempo which characterized the stockpiling which now poses a very real threat to the existence of mankind.

Secondly, the central and fundamental role of the United Nations in the disarmament field, on which each and every Member of the Organization agrees, must be translated into concrete reality and be made effective instead of being relegated to a marginal secondary position wherein the United Nations is confined to welcoming any progress achieved and expressing the hope that more progress may be achieved towards disarmament. It is an irrefutable fact that in the area of disarmament there is a common international responsibility to formulate and implement an internationally approved strategy, with the aim of achieving complete and comprehensive disarmament under effective international control. Proceeding from that premise, any bilateral achievements in the field of disarmament must be viewed as tributaries that feed the mainstream of our common and principal goal and not as substitutes for it.

Here, we must ask ourselves why the Conference on Disarmament has not achieved the progress our peoples and States have hoped for while it is the only negotiating forum in the field of disarmament? We are concerned that the report of the Conference on Disarmament does not reflect any positive picture that is compatible

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

with our hope and desire to achieve progress in solving priority problems in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Thirdly, we should like to reiterate here what we have stated in previous years, namely that the logical sequence of movement towards effective and practical agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament should begin, in our view, with a ban on all nuclear testing and with the urgent conclusion of a comprehensive treaty prohibiting such testing so that we may achieve a halt to the development of new nuclear weapons and come to grips with the problem of the existing nuclear-weapon stockpiles. From this standpoint, my country has joined the call for amending the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We hope that the States Parties to that Treaty will be able to reach an agreement to reach that goal in the Conference that is scheduled to be held at New York in January 1991. The question of nuclear-weapon production is, no doubt, equal in importance to the issue of their development and improvement. Therefore, we must redouble our efforts to halt the production of such weapons. The continued manufacture of nuclear weapons at the present rate makes us ask ourselves: Which quantity of nuclear weapons do we have in mind as we speak of nuclear arms reduction, when such weapons continue to be produced non-stop?

There is also the serious question of the use of such weapons. We cannot accept the justifications advanced to persuade us of the necessity of coexisting with nuclear weapons. If no nuclear war is on anybody's agenda as it is a war that cannot be fought, we must see to it that assertions to this effect are translated into a clear and binding prohibition on the use of nuclear weapons. It is also important that there be a legal instrument guaranteeing the agreement not to use such weapons against non-nuclear States.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

The nuclear-weapons debate takes on a greater significance this year in view of the failure of the Fourth Review Conference of States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was unable to reach agreement on a final document for reasons which we need not repeat here since they are known to all. Also the goals from which those causes of failure stemmed are known to all. The important thing as far as that forum is concerned is that we should stress the fact that the failure of that important Conference will be a vital factor in determining the fate of the Treaty.

It is also important that the international community should not continue to ignore the fact that the two racist régimes in South Africa and in Israel do possess such weapons. That serious development places a serious responsibility on the international community to face up to the risks and consequences arising from a development that threatens not only the Arab and African peoples but also international peace and security.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

While underscoring the importance of heeding the will of the Arab and African peoples to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and turn Africa into a denuclearized zone, we believe that continued silence in the face of the grave consequences of the possession by South Africa and Israel of nuclear weapons and the fact that their nuclear facilities are not under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards will inevitably lead to further proliferation of nuclear weapons to the point where they will get out of control.

Our focusing on nuclear weapons stems from and is consonant with the disarmament priorities unanimously agreed upon by the international community. At the same time, we dissent from the tendency of giving priority to the other aspects of disarmament over the main issue, which is nuclear disarmament. Nor do we agree with the call to accord those other aspects the same degree of importance. However, this clear position does not mean that we ignore the importance of those other aspects of disarmament.

In that connection, we wish to affirm that:

First: we are pleased that the report of the Conference on Disarmament covered the positive side of developments in the field of chemical weapons. We endorse all efforts urgently to conclude a comprehensive treaty prohibiting the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. However, we wonder, if the measures and proposals actually reflect the positive progress achieved in this area, who then is impeding agreement on concluding a comprehensive treaty banning chemical weapons? If we want to heed the will expressed early last year by the States parties to the 1925 Protocol, it is our duty to redouble our efforts to overcome the remaining obstacles and complete the formulation of such a treaty so that it can enter into force.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

Secondly: further, we support international efforts to reduce the huge stockpiles of conventional weapons in our region; those stockpiles pose a threat to our security and stability. We do not think it proper to focus on the use of conventional weapons without addressing the issue of their production, especially the production of sophisticated systems of weapons of mass destruction and those that are excessively injurious. We must differentiate between conventional weapons, on the one hand, and sophisticated nuclear weapons on the other. We must not put both categories on the same level.

I wish to reiterate that we in Yemen do not produce weapons. It is our view that the big Powers must set a good example to be followed by other States, by curbing the development and production of conventional weapons.

When we speak of the arms race, we must speak of one of its important aspects, namely, the naval arms race. Many small States, including Yemen, are threatened by the foreign military naval presence near our waters and our coasts. It is our fate to be situated geographically in a strategic position at the southern entrance of the Red Sea, and that the strait of Bab al-Mandab is in our territorial waters. We are also part of the Indian Ocean region. In the light of these facts, we are keenly interested in the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace adopted by the General Assembly in 1971, especially that our region is now witnessing a continuing grave escalation of the foreign military presence, without any guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be introduced into the area. Because of the risks involved in the military plans of certain big Powers aiming at military intervention in some States of the area, we reaffirm our belief that the security and stability of the region is fundamentally the responsibility of the

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

States of the region, and stress that peace and stability there can be secured only through serious work to implement the goals involved in converting the Indian Ocean to a zone of peace. Foremost among those goals are: putting an end to the arms race among the big Powers; removing military bases from the area; and ending the foreign military presence there.

With the achievement of those goals in mind, we continue to look forward eagerly to the convening of the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean. We express our grave concern and our sorrow at the conduct of certain extra-regional countries and at their attempts to block the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, sometimes using flimsy excuses and sometimes threatening to withdraw, or actually withdrawing, from the work of the Committee.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

In this respect, we wish to stress that those States, by not participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, do not serve the cause of security and stability in the area, and, certainly, do not help to convene the Conference and achieve the positive results to which we all aspire. In this respect, we wish to renew our call to those States, the permanent members of the Security Council and to the maritime Powers that use the Indian Ocean, which have ceased to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, to reconsider their decision in a spirit of responsibility, and display once more the necessary political will so that we may all be able to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean and to reach conclusions that would take into account the interests of all parties and States and guarantee the security and stability of the States and peoples of the area.

Our interest in the issues of disarmament stems from our keenness to safeguard peace, security and stability in our region, in particular, and in the world, in general. This interest also embodies our conviction regarding the close relationship between disarmament and development. This conviction arises from the fact that Yemen is one of the least developed countries. It is natural that Yemen should grapple with numerous obstacles and hardships in its development efforts, especially that the recent grave developments relating to the escalation of the arms race in our area, impose on us additional burdens striving to maintain our security and stability.

This close link between disarmament and development is becoming all the more strong for most of the countries of the world that look forward to the positive developments in international relations as a main factor in forging a momentum towards the translation of the constructive proposals that were put forward during the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development into a concrete reality and to implement the resolutions and the

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

recommendations adopted by the aforesaid Conference through harnessing the sums released by disarmament to the benefit of development, especially in the developing countries.

This call is not Yemen's alone. It is the call of many other developing countries as well. Our partners in this world have to realize that international peace and security cannot be guaranteed while the majority of the members of the international community continue to face acute economic problems that jeopardize their security and stability and even, in certain cases, their very existence.

We believe in the common responsibility that is incumbent upon us to unify our efforts to achieve our ultimate goal of complete and general disarmament under international effective control. Our concerns and our interests are in keeping with those of the rest of the countries of the world or, at least, of the majority of those countries. We are confident that the United Nations still has a central role to play in the field of disarmament. There is absolutely no substitute for this role. As for the bilateral efforts and the agreements concluded in the context of such efforts, they should be complementary to the United Nations central role.

In view of the importance of the United Nations role, Yemen maintains that we should all redouble our efforts to strengthen that role through active and effective participation in the existing organs that deal with disarmament. A genuine political will is needed, a will that takes into consideration the interests of all. There should be a resolve that allows our peoples to participate in translating their hopes and aspirations into reality in the field of disarmament as expressed in the World Disarmament Campaign.

In conclusion, we wish to reaffirm that the content of the resolutions which we will adopt in this Committee and our resolve to translate them into concrete

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Yemen)

reality serve the main goal of our deliberations and will be the yardstick by which our success in discharging our responsibilities will be measured. It is not by the number of the resolutions we adopt that our work shall be measured. To achieve that goal, we are prepared to co-operate with you in carrying out our tasks successfully.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): I take this opportunity, Sir, to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We are very much encouraged by the effective manner in which you have guided the work of this Committee so far. I assure you of my delegation's support and confidence in your leadership.

Our congratulations are also extended to your predecessor on the efficient and constructive manner in which he conducted the work of the Committee at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

We also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General, Department for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and his staff for their efforts in producing the various reports which are facilitating the work of this Committee.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

After 45 years of uncertainty and bitter ideological rivalry between the super-Powers and their respective supporters, the winds of change blowing through Eastern Europe and elsewhere have created a new hope and an improved climate for international co-operation, which, together with the continuing progress on disarmament, should release resources for development purposes. Papua New Guinea is convinced that the 1990s give us hope for a real and genuine dialogue. The relaxation of East-West tensions and the dramatic process of democratization and reform in the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe present the international community with an opportunity, a new momentum, for a genuine dialogue on development and environment issues.

The vision of the founding fathers of the United Nations as embodied in the Charter was to avoid another world war and settle international disputes by peaceful means or by genuine co-operation and consensus among the Member States of the United Nations. This collective security system of the United Nations was meant to provide a sense of security and mutual confidence which would allow disarmament and arms control to go hand-in-hand under the auspices of the Security Council. However, the lack of a consensus and the perennial disagreements between the permanent members and other influential members of the Security Council rendered the United Nations ineffective and called its credibility into question.

The political organization which was "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" was further inhibited by the emergence of nuclear weapons. While we agree that the maintenance of international peace and security remains the primary concern of the United Nations, we also appreciate that this was and is its most difficult and urgent task.

Papua New Guinea is convinced that, with the dramatic changes taking place throughout the world, there now seems to be some prospect of slowly converting the

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

current ad hoc and largely reactive approach into a more consistent and reliable way of maintaining peace. We believe that the change in the international climate initiated by President Mikhail Gorbachev is of incalculable importance. In this regard, we welcome the award of the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize to the President of the Soviet Union. We appeal to the other leaders of the world to take advantage of this new and challenging opportunity for international leadership on the path towards international peace and security. The degree of our success will depend in considerable measure on the capacity and quality of their leadership in this vitally important field.

Papua New Guinea has followed with keen interest the ongoing summit meetings between the Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the United States President, George Bush. We welcome the progress they have made on the strategic arms reduction treaty, the threshold test-ban Treaty, the Treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions, the bilateral agreement on limiting chemical weapons and the endorsement of the current negotiations on limiting conventional forces in Europe. One has to believe and hope that at the super-Power level the threat that once existed for various reasons has now decreased, but the situation at the intermediate level requires a great deal of attention because there has been an enormous flow of arms to the developing world.

The build-up of armaments by one or another country not only exacerbates fear but also deepens the lack of confidence. Papua New Guinea sincerely hopes that those States, especially developing countries, which benefit in one way or another from the present East-West détente will follow the lead given in their efforts to limit their proliferation of nuclear, chemical and other weapons.

The United Nations has often played a useful role in averting the worst: a nuclear confrontation between the super-Powers. Papua New Guinea continues to

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

believe it essential that the United Nations be involved in any international peace and security arrangements, be they on a bilateral, regional or multilateral basis.

There is a good deal of reason for the nuclear-weapon States and others to move quickly towards concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty as soon as possible. The 1991 amendment Conference on the partial test-ban Treaty presents one such opportunity, and the nuclear-weapon States might even take inspiration from the non-nuclear-weapon States. We firmly believe that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, because many countries have acquired and are still acquiring nuclear and chemical weapons, technologies and capabilities, thus exacerbating already volatile situations in some regions of the world.

Papua New Guinea, together with the other 14 Pacific island States in the South Pacific Forum, is committed to a nuclear-free Pacific and therefore a nuclear-free world. The ratification by our Government of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, usually referred to as the Treaty of Rarotonga, attests to this commitment. The Treaty of Rarotonga represents a genuine and sincere commitment by all of us in the region to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, both regionally and globally. The South Pacific community and the international community have a right to demand that the nuclear-weapon States make at least some minimum concession in order to reduce nuclear proliferation.

The South Pacific region has experienced a prolonged period of peace, if not prosperity, since the shattering experience of the Second World War, a peace disrupted only by the periodic instability brought about by nuclear tests carried out by France on the pretext that it must have a deterrent capability and satisfy its security requirements. While Papua New Guinea appreciates the philosophy that nuclear weapons were once the only effective counter to conventional arms superiority, that philosophy no longer holds true.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

The South Pacific island States are convinced that nuclear proliferation is now a real threat to all of us, because we believe that if nations go on asserting that these weapons are indispensable to security it simply incites more and more States to seek to acquire them. Furthermore, we do not believe that some States must possess nuclear weapons in order to deter certain others from using them. Therefore, while France is asking us to understand its security requirements, we appeal to France to respect and understand the aspirations of the people of the South Pacific and the need to preserve their livelihoods. We wish to reiterate our call not only for a reduction in the number of nuclear tests, but also for the complete cessation of those tests in our region.

We are also following closely developments on the draft chemical weapons treaty, which we hope will completely ban the production, stockpiling and deployment of chemical weapons. While Papua New Guinea welcomes the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union to destroy their chemical weapons stocks in excess of 5,000 tons of chemical agents by the year 2002, we are indeed concerned that our region is, sadly, once again being chosen as the site for destroying stocks of chemical weapons on Johnston Atoll, together with those shipped from Western Europe. Again, it is our sincere hope that this facility on Johnston Atoll will not become a permanent site for the incineration of chemical weapons. This stand was reiterated to President Bush during consultations with 11 South Pacific island Heads of Government last weekend in Honolulu, Hawaii.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

We are encouraged by President Bush's recent commitment with the Pacific Island leaders that the present programme of incineration of chemical weapons on Johnston Atoll will not only be safe but will be the final one.

In conclusion, we should like to share with the Committee an observation by an English statesman who had a vision of interrational politics and events and was a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize - Philip Noel-Baker:

> "Lasting peace and justice will come from the gradual cumulative interaction of many policies and many great reforms: a conscious, persistent effort to strengthen the deliberative institutions of the United Nations; the submission of all legal conflicts to the International Court; the building-up of international legislation and administration for the greater happiness and prosperity of mankind. But these new policies can never triumph until the arms race has been ended and the nations have thus decided that they will finally abandon the use of force."

Philip Noel-Baker is aptly describing a complex and often daunting task that requires the patience, determination and dedication of everyone. We believe we can achieve the peace that Philip Noel-Baker envisaged by subscribing to and upholding the rule of law, which is the goal of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. AMAR (Morocco) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, first of all allow me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you warmly on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are convinced that under your guidance the First Committee will be able to carry out its tasks effectively and successfully. Let me assure you, Sir, that the Moroccan delegation will co-operate with you in easing the burden of your duties throughout the session.

(Mr. Amar, Morocco)

After a long period of conflicts, tension and mistrust, we are now witnessing clear signs of progress in the search for a stable and lasting peace. The trends in this direction have been further strengthened this past year.

Although stability and peace still do not prevail in the world, the positive developments in international relations are continuing. This favourable climate has been promoted by the enhanced rapprochement between East and West, the movement towards the settlement of various regional conflicts, the significant political changes taking place in Europe and in other regions of the world and the growing role of the United Nations in tackling the major problems facing the international community. New prospects are now opening up in the search for more far-reaching measures in the area of arms limitation and even disarmament.

The United States and the Soviet Union have begun wide ranging bilateral negotiations with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the fact that the commitments entered into under the 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the IMF Treaty - are being respected; the Treaty calls for the elimination of an entire category of nuclear weapons and thus constitutes a decisive step in the disarmament process.

My delegation also applauds the significant progress made at the bilateral negotiations on strategic arms reductions (START) between the two super-Powers, as well as the agreement signed in June 1990 at their summit meeting providing for substantial reductions of various categories of their offensive strategic weapons. Their decision to continue negotiations on new restrictions and effective limitations in improving nuclear strategic and tactical weapons is of great importance.

(Mr. Amar, Morocco)

The bilateral agreements on nuclear weapons concluded between Washington and Moscow notwithstanding, these weapons continue to be improved; there is still nuclear testing, although at a slower rate; and there has been no decrease in the production of fissionable materials for military purposes.

In pursuing their disarmament efforts the two super-Powers should promote dynamic interaction between their bilateral negotiations and multilateral negotiations; they should also give special attention to the creation of conditions likely to lead to including the other nuclear Powers in the disarmament negotiations.

In the area of conventional weapons and forces, a major step will soon be taken when the 34 States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) will meet next month in Paris with a view to substantially reducing current levels of conventional forces in Europe. The anticipated agreement will confirm the new climate in relations between the members of the former blocs and give us an idea as to future, more ambitious disarmament negotiations this time to include all European and North American countries.

Despite the many appeals of the General Assembly on the need for concluding a treaty on halting nuclear tests, no real progress has been made in this area outside of the resumption of negotiations between the two super-Powers.

Morocco supports the constructive efforts within this framework and hopes that they will lead to a global agreement. We remain convinced that without a total nuclear-test ban the nuclear-arms race will continue, even if it is nurtured by testing only at the lowest possible level.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty has to this day proved to be the most effective instrument for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons; hence it has made a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

(Mr. Amar, Morocco)

We believe that the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was a success, in view of the constructive debate it generated and even though the participants did not agree on conclusions as regards the means for ending the nuclear-arms race.

(Mr. Amar, Morocco)

Extending the NPT should not, in our judgement, be a mere formality but, rather, the result of a renewed commitment with a view to adopting effective specific measures to end horizontal and vertical nuclear weapons proliferation.

The nuclear non-proliferation régime should be strengthened. Similarly, non-nuclear weapons States should be given guarantees protecting them against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; this should take the form of a legally binding instrument at the international level, until the total elimination of nuclear weapons has been achieved. None the less, international co-operation in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be broadened in order to provide developing countries with access to the technology they need to promote and develop nuclear energy for purposes of economic and social development.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is another factor in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation system. The establishment of such zones contributes to strengthening peace, security and stability in a region, while reducing the geographical confines within which nuclear weapons can be deployed. The creation of such zones is a nuclear-disarmament measure whereby non-nuclear weapons States can concretely show their commitment to the total elimination of this type of weapon.

In supporting the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, Morocco cannot but regret Israel's refusal to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to submit its nuclear facilities to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The Israeli refusal has heightened the military imbalance in that region, which is already sorely tried by political problems.

Morocco is alarmed by the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It urgently appeals to the international community to seek a speedy solution to this problem and to make that region a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

(Mr. Amar, Morocco)

A similar situation exists in Africa, where South Africa is also refusing to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to have all its nuclear facilities monitored by the IAEA. The Disarmament Commission's recommendations on South Africa's nuclear capability and the report requested by the General Assembly will contribute towards clarifying the problem of that country's development of a nuclear delivery vehicle, something which is giving rise to concerns throughout Africa.

The risk of seeing the arms race spreading to outer space is yet another concern for the international community. Morocco attaches the greatest importance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament in this area and supports the idea of greater international co-operation.

Morocco constantly encourages the conclusion of a global, verifiable convention on banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, although it considers that the conclusion of a general treaty completely banning such weapons remains essential. My country welcomes the agreement between the two major Powers on the reduction of a significant number of their chemical weapons. The delegation of Morocco hopes that more substantial information, especially on the various aspects of the elimination of all stockpiles of chemical weapons, will be provided to the international community with a view to promoting the drafting of such a convention.

There is no need to stress the multiple links between today's two problems - disarmament and development - or to emphasize that it is of overriding importance to consider the reduction of military expenditures in close relationship with the promotion of economic development. Military expenditures in the world stand in stark contrast to the misery and poverty affecting the majority of mankind. The

(Mr. Amar, Morocco)

Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development should serve as a warning and prompt the international community to act immediately.

Security does not rest on the military aspect alone; it must be considered as a whole by including its political, economic and social components. Security must not be the privilege of the most powerful but, rather, the guarantee for all peoples that they may live in peace and security. It is precisely for the purpose of promoting peace, security and regional co-operation that the countries of Arab Maghreb decided to establish the Arab Maghreb Union, whose legal bases and operational structures were laid down by the Basic Treaty of Marrakech in 1989. This Union is an overriding imperative in keeping with the interests of the peoples of the region, both domestically and internationally. The results of that process will inevitably have a positive impact on the relations of fraternity and solidarity that exist between the peoples of the Maghreb, in the interest of their peoples and of regional and international peace and security.

Morocco remains convinced of the fundamental importance of the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament within the United Nations system. Since it considers that disarmament initiatives, whether conventional or nuclear, cannot be the prerogative of only two States, the participation of the whole international community is required.

In this regard, the United Nations role in this field remains a matter of capital importance. My country remains convinced that, in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, our Organization should maintain its leading role in the area of disarmament. Thus the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies should continue carrying out their deliberative functions, and the First Committee in particular should continue playing its role

(Mr. Amar, Morocco)

as the main committee for dealing with disarmament and related international security questions.

In this spirit, the Moroccan delegation will, as it has done in the past, participate fully and actively in the work of the First Committee in the interest of international peace, security and co-operation.

Mr. MAYORGA CORTES (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all I should like to express to you, Sir, my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you presiding over our deliberations. We are particularly pleased that this session of the First Committee is being led by the representative of a country, Nepal, which is a friend of ours, and with which Nicaragua enjoys excellent relations. Your diplomatic experience and knowledge guarantee that our Committee will produce excellent results. Of course, our congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, the international political climate has undergone profound, significant changes. We can now joyfully speak about the end of the cold war, which for 40 years caused such threats to and turmoil for mankind. This long period was marked by East-West confrontation and an increase in the arms race, which on a number of occasions led the world to the brink of nuclear holocaust.

The many signs of détente and the concrete agreements so far achieved between the super-Powers suggest that reason and understanding have finally prevailed. Agreement rather than intransigence and negotiation rather than confrontation have enabled us to establish a safer international climate, in which we can glimpse a new era of co-operation in international relations.

(Mr. Mayorga Cortes, Nicaragua)

This new international determination to resolve conflicts is a definite fact, one which has been demonstrated by co-operation within the United Nations among the members of the Security Council, by the unprecedented actions taken in respect of the serious situation in the Persian Gulf, and by the consensus achieved a few days ago regarding the problem of the occupied Palestinian territories and by the search for solutions to many other regional conflicts which are awaiting resolution.

The new spirit of East-West co-operation has changed Europe from a divided region to one marked by freedom and co-operation. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany have consolidated new democratic paths in Eastern Europe; the political map has been altered in that continent, which is now gradually being changed into a single political, economic and cultural entity. We have witnessed important changes between the two super-Powers in the context both of nuclear weapons and of conventional weapons. The vision of the future shared by those two countries and the high spirit of co-operation existing between the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union give us reason for optimism regarding the possibility of a safer and more stable world in the near future.

There have been many positive changes on the international scene in recent months but there have also been some negative events which have increased the tension in various parts of the world: we cannot but deplore and condemn the use of force by Iraq against Kuwait and the lack of respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations which that State has demonstrated. The repeated threat that chemical weapons might be used in the conflict in the Middle East forces us to redouble our efforts in support of conventional disarmament on a regional scale and to pay particular attention to the danger, unprecedented for mankind, of a chemical war.

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Accordingly, we view with concern the fact that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, in spite of progress in many areas, has made but little progress on the convention on chemical weapons and we must, therefore, stress the need for the adoption and entry into force of that convention.

In the case of nuclear weapons, notwithstanding the agreements between the two super-Powers, other States with sizeable and modern arsenals have not yet shown a real commitment to follow their example. There still exist in the world thousands of nuclear warheads which could be activated at any time and because of them we have not been able to rid the Earth of the nightmare of nuclear destruction. In spite of the progress achieved, in certain countries of the world, many of them developing countries, there still exists the practice of using nuclear weapons as a deterrent strategy and policy of domination.

The limited progress made at the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the non-proliferation Treaty held in Geneva last month is an eloquent demonstration of the fact that we must moderate our most optimistic expectations and seek viable formulas to increase confidence and help remove the main obstacles to the conclusion of effective agreements on the various topics related to nuclear disarmament.

It will not be possible to succeed in lessening the proliferation of nuclear weapons on a global scale without the immediate conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Nicaragua hopes that the new spirit of co-operation between the two super-Powers and the understanding among the five permanent members of the Security Council will lead to a speedy conclusion of an agreement banning nuclear tests.

It is a fact that the threat of nuclear destruction continues to exist notwithstanding the progress that has been made. It is equally true that thousands

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of people are dying in various parts of the world as a result, not of the use of nuclear weapons, but of the use of conventional weapons. There are still significant arsenals of conventional weapons in various regions of the world, especially in zones characterized by political instability, economic backwardness and social tension. It is all too well known that throughout the past 40 years most armed conflicts have taken place at a regional level using conventional weapons. That is why it is urgent to promote, within the context of general and complete disarmament, conventional disarmament on a regional scale.

My delegation is pleased to see that the positive trends which now permit of solutions to various regional and subregional conflicts have led to a gradual limitation and reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons that should lead to an improvement in the political climate in certain areas in conflict.

In Central America a regional effort has been made to bring the countries together and this is moving us, gradually but irreversibly, towards the eradication of war and violence and towards economic development and co-operation. This spirit has been clearly shown in the agreements signed by the Central American Presidents at their various summit meetings. In this context special mention should be made of the Esquipulas II agreements, which mandated the creation among the Central American countries of the Security Commission to consolidate the process of peace and democratization and to build a climate of confidence and security in the region.

The Security Commission of the Esquipulas II agreements, which has no precedent in the history of Central America, is aimed at:

"ensuring that the armed forces of the countries of the area will be defensive in order to protect sovereignty and internal order and not offensive; ensuring that the armed forces of the countries of the area are in reasonable balance or that the equipment and numbers are such as not to constitute a threat to

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neighbouring countries; and defining a new model of security for Central American countries based on co-operation, co-ordination, communication and prevention, with the aim of reaching commitments regarding foreign military presences in the area".

As disarmament is one of the corner-stones of the foreign policy of the Government of Nicaragua, we are in favour of a firm commitment by the countries of the area to the elimination of the arms race and the reduction of forces and war matériel and to using the resources thus released for the economic and social development of Central America. To this end, Nicaragua will continue to promote negotiations on security for the countries of the area and verification of these agreements by the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS).

At the summit conference which was held in Antigua in Guatemala, last June the Central American Presidents declared:

"Violence belongs to a part of history which we shall not forget but which we shall not repeat. Now we must choose new paths. That is why in order to reflect the popular will we have said we want no more war and violence and instead of that the energy of the people should be placed in the service of development and in the interests of the Central American people."

Consistent with these agreements, Nicaragua strongly urges the completion of the regional negotiations on security, verification, control and the limitation of armaments.

For this purpose, at the meeting of the Security Commission held in San José last July, Nicaragua proposed a freezing of offensive weapons at the present level.

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We have encouraged verification in the area of disarmament by the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and at the present stage of negotiations Nicaragua is encouraging the adoption of criteria and procedures for establishing maximum limits for weapons and military personnel. At the same time, we favour the adoption of an assessment scheme to establish a reasonable balance of forces.

As part of these ongoing meetings, the Security Commission met again in San Salvador in September 1990 in order to consider the question of strengthening confidence between the countries of Central America

> "in order to facilitate the consolidation of regional peace, internal democratization and reconciliation". (A/45/642, p. 2)

At its next meeting, the Security Commission will consider

> "the criteria to be taken into account in establishing each country's military needs based on its actual situation, with a view to achieving a reasonable balance or proportional overall equivalence in the region". (ibid., p. 2)

Nicaragua's commitment to peace, democracy and determined progress towards disarmament was clearly expressed in the statement made a few days ago by our President, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, in celebrating United Nations Day. She said:

> "We have rejected violence and chosen the path of peace and freedom. War, which became a nightmare for the family of Nicaraguans, has been banished from the minds of our men, women and children."

That is the new spirit prevailing today in Nicaragua, which fills us with confidence and confirms our belief that it is possible to find solutions to the problems of our countries, many of which are deeply rooted not only in the minds of our people but also in the history and culture of our societies.

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Nicaragua has begun to move towards demilitarization; we have ended the war which for many years brought death and grief to our people; we have disarmed the Nicaraguan resistance and the national army has been reduced to one third its size at the end of 1989, that is, from more than 90,000 men to a total of 33,000. In this same spirit that has prevailed at the national level, we are committed to peace in the region. The unilateral and joint efforts with regard to security, verification and the control and limitation of weapons being made by the countries of Central America are enabling us to make progress towards demilitarization of the area.

In order gradually to build a peaceful, stable region, my country is particularly interested in initiating, within the United Nations, the process of making Central America, in the light of the real progress made by each country on its own and as a function of the regional situation that results from these efforts, a zone of peace and co-operation. We conceive of this not as an intellectual exercise or a mere declaration but as a reflection of the realities which we are shaping. Nicaragua supports this initiative as part of a general movement towards democracy, co-operation and the demilitarization of the zone, because we are convinced of the potential benefits that this would bring not only to the subregion, but also to all of Latin America and the Caribbean.

One particularly important aspect of this initiative is its eminently pragmatic nature. It would be a gradual process that would take place as we moved towards democracy, co-operation and security in each country at the subregional level. This clearly demonstrates the importance of promoting deep-rooted interaction of the political, social and economic processes and their eventual convergence.

The geographical location of Central America makes it an ideal transit zone and inter-oceanic link. The dramatic history of the region and the events of the

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last decade laid the foundation for one of the most impressive international peace efforts. Today, in the new regional circumstances and taking advantage also of the present world climate, no one doubts that the future of Central America lies in the strengthening of peace, democracy and development, principles which, together with reconciliation, form the fundamental pillars of the foreign policy of my country.

Within this framework the Esquipulas agreements in effect today are of overriding importance and must be further strengthened. In this connection, our delegation believes that the establishment of Central America as a zone of peace and co-operation would be a further demonstration of the political will of the Central American peoples and Governments and of our determination to make progress in building a peaceful region in which the economic and social development of our peoples has priority.

Central America, as a zone of peace and co-operation, would contemplate the progressive reduction of weapons and military personnel, with demilitarization of the area as the final objective. It could include, further, the exclusion of nuclear weapons from the region, in keeping with the commitments under the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which we believe to be the proper framework within which to regulate the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction. We might also include, among other things, a ban on transporting through the zone of peace any nuclear, chemical or bacteriological weapons, as well as the prohibition of illicit traffic in weapons in the region.

It is necessary to repeat that the establishment of Central America as a zone of peace and co-operation should be a gradual process. In a sense it has already begun with the progress made in the solution of some of the more urgent problems of the region, such as the ending of the war in Nicaragua. But these efforts must be

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further consolidated. The process would also be in keeping with the agreements reached at the subregional disarmament and security commission and with the progress in the bilateral talks at present taking place between other countries of the region.

In our opinion, the establishment of Central America as a zone of peace and co-operation would be an important step towards the shared goal of general and complete disarmament. It would also make a significant contribution to the efforts being made in various parts of the world to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. Conventional disarmament measures in our region would strengthen the security of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Within the inter-American framework, Nicaragua favours a new model of regional security in which the military emphasis would be replaced by political and economic co-operation in connection with the settlement of conflicts, disarmament, environmental problems, the eradication of drug trafficking, integration and development.

The establishment of Central America as a zone of peace and co-operation should be complementary to other efforts being made in the Latin American region. In this context, we should mention the innovative concept of security contained in the Galapagos Declaration: Andean Agreement on Peace, Security and Co-operation, signed by the Heads of State of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela in December 1989, which was circulated as document CD/1011 of the Conference on Disarmament.

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In particular, we would stress the contents of the joint Declaration signed by Argentina and Brazil at the Fourth Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in Geneva from 20 August to 14 September. In that Declaration those countries reiterated their firm commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all their forms. Similarly, we consider that the important proposal by the President of Venezuela, Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, in his address to the General Assembly and at the World Summit for Children deserves special consideration within the Organization. He proposed that Governments agree to a 10 per cent reduction in their military budgets and that the funds thus released be used to finance a United Nations fund for social development with a view to dealing decisively with the poverty affecting hundreds of thousands of children throughout the world. Such initiatives, including our proposal, spring from the innovative spirit with which Latin America is dealing with the new requirements of security and co-operation.

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made in the international political arena, disarmament continues to be one of the international community's main concerns. There now exists an excellent opportunity to make progress on disarmament, especially in areas in which only a few years ago it was impossible to make any kind of commitment. Means of achieving that objective should be further explored in multilateral negotiations within the United Nations framework - always strictly in keeping with the principle of equality and reciprocity.

This new international climate is being strengthened by the ideals that in fact gave rise to the United Nations more than 40 years ago, suggesting that the Organization will play a more active role in the settlement of disputes and the prevention of conflicts. In this connection we might mention the contents of the joint statement by the Soviet Union and the United States of 3 October entitled "Responsibility for peace and security in the changing world" which states that:

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"The United Nations can play a leading role on issues of global concern. We will actively support efforts, throughout the United Nations system, to implement and strengthen the principles and the system of international peace, security and international co-operation laid down in the Charter." (A/45/598, p. 5)

Our delegation is particularly interested in the United Nations playing an increasingly significant and central role in negotiations on disarmament, which is particularly timely given the institutional changes we are witnessing. This more central role of the United Nations is reflected in its effective multilateral machinery, which has given the international order a certain stability. As was stated in the report entitled "Comprehensive study on nuclear weapons", presented to the General Assembly more than 10 years ago:

"We have, in the nations, an institution which should be utilized for all the purposes and stages that are relevant to the process of disarmament - negotiation, agreement, implementation, verification and ratification where necessary." (A/35/392, p. 157)

Central American countries in general, and Nicaragua in particular, have personal knowledge of the irreparable damage war can cause, and we know only too well that the losers are always the peoples themselves. Nicaragua will always be in the forefront of support for efforts of the international community in favour of disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, and prohibition of the development, production and acquisition of chemical weapons. We say this with a moral authority that derives from our own efforts and those of the Central American region in support of the pacification of the zone and the establishment and consolidation of democracy, and our efforts to promote development in our area.

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Our peoples are exhausted and impoverished. There is no room for insensitivity - not when we are speaking on behalf of the loftiest interests of our country, and of the vast majority of its population.

For our Government, which is determined to conquer our age-old underdevelopment, no commitment is more important than those we have just addressed. I am certain these are the aspirations of the Nicaraguan society as a whole. Here and now we call for the support of the international community for our initiative to promote among the five Central American countries a zone of peace and co-operation. That would crown one of the most successful efforts of the United Nations in support of international peace and security.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, tomorrow, 31 October, the Committee will proceed to the second phase of its work, the consideration of and action on draft resolutions on all disarmament items, agenda items 45 to 66 and 155. Members will recall that, in accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, a total of 26 meetings have been set aside for this phase of our work. In accordance with past practice, it is my intention to set aside the first part of that phase, approximately 10 to 12 meetings, for the introduction of draft resolutions and comments on them. I should like to urge those delegations wishing to introduce draft resolutions or to make comments on them during this stage of the Committee's work to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as early as possible. Subsequently the Committee will proceed to the stage of taking action on draft resolutions under the disarmament agenda items.

I shall have more specific information to convey to members in this regard at a later stage.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.